**Preparing for the Socratic Seminar**

*This sheet is a guide to help you prepare for a successful seminar. Please follow these rules, suggestions, and guidelines carefully.*

**1. Procedure during the Seminar**

a. What I will be doing:

i. *I will not be a part of the conversation.* I will be circling outside the seminar, taking notes, watching, and asking an *occasional* question.

ii. I will be observing *who talks to who, who behaves well, who is speaking,* and *who is working.*

iii. I will interject into the conversation whenever I feel that:

1. *Someone has not had the chance to speak for a long time.*

2. *The direction of the conversation is veering off topic.*

b. What you will be doing:

i. *You all will be leading and running the conversation.* When someone is talking, you all should look at them. When you are answering questions, you should look at each other.

ii. You should take notes on what people say, so that you can *respond and answer* what other people say.

iii. You should raise your hand if you want to speak. *The speaker will call on the next student. Try listening as opposed to waiting to talk—hold your hand until the speaker has finished.*

**2. Key Behavioral Aspects in a Socratic Seminar**

These are the essential rules for behavioral during the seminar:

i. All will listen when one person speaks.

ii. Be polite and let others speak—think:

1. Does my point *directly* relate to what was just said?

2. Have I just spoken?

3. Is there someone trying to speak who hasn’t had a chance to speak yet?

iii. Keep an open mind—try out other perspectives you may not have thought of before!

iv. If you disagree, use *evidence (especially evidence we have looked at in class).*

v. Be patient—a good rule of thumb is if you’ve spoken 3 times already, wait one minute before trying to speak again.

**3. Key Academic Aspects of the Seminar:**

These are the essential rules for academic success:

i. Make specific references to our evidence first and foremost. Outside sources are welcome, but evidence that we have looked at is most important.

ii. Make connections between ideas.

iii. Try to identify contradictions, and use evidence to back them up.

**4. Assessment on the Seminar**

These are the ways in which I will assess you:

i. I will be watching, taking notes, and asking questions. My notes and how you respond to questions using evidence will comprise your assessment.

ii. I will be counting:

1. the number of times you speak,

2. the quality of the evidence you use,

3. Your behavior and conduct, such as:

a. Tracking the speaker with your eyes

b. Taking notes

c. Avoiding interruption

d. Disagreeing kindly

e. Yielding to others

4. Your prepared evidence, notes, and assembled packet.

**5. Assembly of Evidence**

a. You must have all the sources we have gone over in class and assigned as homework ready to look at, to consult, and to use as you *or another student* uses itin the seminar.

b. You must have organized notes that display specific quotes/textual evidence, and notes you have prepared to explain your argument.

c. You should think about how people might counter your argument—what are some holes in your argument? Where are some parts of your argument weak? Not required, but important skill to have.

**6. Things to Keep in Mind**

a. You may not have a lot of time to talk—your argument should be *concise,* and your evidence/talking points should be *clear and short.*

b. Be polite, but assertive—you will have to speak at some point, so don’t let everyone talk over you—assert yourself!

c. Be heard—this is essential for you to get a good grade. You can do a number of things to be heard:

i. State your argument

ii. Agree with someone’s argument, and add

1. Extra evidence from what we’ve assembled

2. Extra evidence from outside sources

3. A different way of looking at the same problem

4. A good way of describing what someone is saying

iii. Counter an argument (disagreement)

iv. Find holes in someone’s argument and counter with evidence

v. Ask questions! It’s okay to ask something when you are confused.

**7. List of Resources Needed for Socratic Seminar:**

1. Images of Civil Rights Movement
2. The Conflict of Orders Reading
3. Death of Tiberius paragraph *or the Gracchi Brothers Reading*
4. Gandhi quotes
5. Syria Article
6. Your argument worksheet